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UNCLAS MANAMA 001353

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/VO/F/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [BEXP](#) [ETRD](#)

SUBJECT: INITIATIVE TO FACILITATE BUSINESS TRAVEL

REF: STATE 166108

1. Post's Consular Section accepts walk-in applications and issues same day visas. Applicants generally wait less than two hours from the time they walk in to apply for the visa to the time they walk out with their visas in hand.

2. Although Post does not have an appointment system, the Consular Section realizes the importance of facilitating business travel and has taken steps towards further expediting the process for these travelers. In connection with the American Chamber of Commerce and the American Association of Bahrain (local American business group), the Consular Section offers special services and priority appointments to business travelers from these groups.

3. Members forward their applications to be reviewed and data-entered, which ensures that documentation is complete and saves approximately half an hour on the day of the interview. Applicants are given an appointment, and on the interview date, they do not wait in the regular application line. The back-up NIV officer interviews and adjudicates the case and the applicant may then leave and pick up the visa later or may wait 15 minutes for printing. The whole process takes less than half an hour.

4. Post's conoff also attends board meetings and other events of the country's main business groups, and coordinates with the Economic/Commercial Section on both routine and official business travel. The Consular Section regularly schedules block appointments for conference and seminar participants and provides VIP appointments during non-public hours for Embassy referrals. The section also provides priority processing for government delegations, like those attending U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement negotiations and IMF/World Bank sessions.

5. The Consular Section continues to provide the most efficient level of service to the business community and welcomes further Department initiatives and developments aimed at supporting and facilitating business travel.

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